



## No.9: Dealing with Uncertainty

Life is filled with uncertainty, especially at times like this. While many things remain outside your control, your mind-set is key to coping with difficult circumstances and facing the unknown.



Uncertainty is all around us, never more so than today. The current COVID-19 pandemic has heightened uncertainty over the economy, employment, finances, relationships, and of course, physical and mental health. We're all different in how much uncertainty we can tolerate in life. But all of us have a limit. If you feel overwhelmed by uncertainty and worry, it's important to know that you're not alone; many of us are in the same boat at this time. As the coronavirus outbreak has shown, life can change very quickly and very unpredictably.

To cope with all this uncertainty, many of us use worrying as a tool trying to predict the future and avoid nasty surprises. But there are **healthier ways to cope with uncertainty**—and that begins with adjusting your mind-set.

**...97%**  
of the things  
you worry  
about don't  
even happen

The following tips can help you to:

- Focus on controlling those things that are under your control.
- Challenge your need for certainty.
- Learn to better tolerate, even embrace, the inevitable uncertainty of life.
- Reduce your anxiety and stress levels.

**Tip 1: Take action over the things you can control:** Whatever your fears or personal circumstances, instead of worrying about the uncontrollable, try to refocus your mind on taking action over the aspects that are within your control. This way, you'll switch from ineffective worrying into active problem-solving..

**Tip 2: Challenge your need for certainty:** While uncertainty and change are inescapable parts of life, we often adopt behaviours to try to cope with the discomfort they can bring. In addition to worrying about every possible scenario, you may be excessively seeking reassurance from others. Micromanaging people. Procrastinating. Repeatedly checking things.

How to challenge these behaviours: **Ask yourself the following questions:**

1. **What are the advantages of certainty?** Opportunity often arises from the unexpected and having to face uncertainty in life can also help you learn to adapt, overcome challenges, and increase your resiliency - it can help you to grow as a person.

2. **How much can you be absolutely certain about in life?** The truth is no matter how much you try to plan and prepare for every possible outcome, life will find a way of surprising you

By challenging your need for certainty, you can begin to let go of negative behaviours, reduce stress and worry, and free up time and energy for more practical purposes.

**Tip 3: Learn to accept uncertainty:** To help you become more tolerant and accepting of uncertainty, the following steps can help:

**Recognise when you feel the need for certainty.** Notice when you start to feel anxious and fearful about a situation,

**Allow yourself to feel the uncertainty.** Like all emotions, if you allow yourself to feel fear and uncertainty, they will eventually pass. Focus on the present moment and your breathing and allow yourself to simply feel and observe the uncertainty you're experiencing.

**Let go.** Respond to the "what-ifs" running through your head by acknowledging that you're not a fortune teller; you don't know what will happen. All you can do is let go and accept that uncertainty as part of life.

**Shift your attention.** Focus on solvable worries, taking action on those aspects of a problem that you can control, or simply, shut down the negative thinking/worrying and go back to what you were doing.

**Tip 4: Focus on the present:** Uncertainty is often centered on worries about the future and all the bad things you can anticipate happening. Switch your attention to what's happening right now. By being fully connected to the present, you can interrupt the negative assumptions and catastrophic predictions running through your mind. Each time you focus your attention back on the present, you're strengthening a new mental habit that can help you break free of uncertainty.

**FOCUS ON THE  
PRESENT MOMENT.  
STAY IN THE MOMENT.**

**Tip 5: Manage stress and anxiety:** Taking steps to reduce your overall stress and anxiety levels can help you interrupt the downward spiral of negative thoughts, find inner calm, and better cope with the uncertainty in your life. **Get moving. Make time for relaxation. Get plenty of sleep. Eat a healthy diet**

Embrace uncertainty.  
Some of the most  
beautiful chapters  
in our lives won't  
have a title until  
much later.



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